GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:245
ANSWERED ON:26.07.2006
SAARC OBSERVERS
Athithan Shri Dhanuskodi

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India has backed US as SAARC observer;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether certain other countries have also shown interest to become SAARC observers;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the reaction of the Union Government thereto?

Answer

THE MINSTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMED)

(a) The decision to approve the request of US for grant of Observer Status with SAARC was taken by consensus, as per SAARC Rules of Procedure.

(b),(c),(d) & (e) The 13th SAARC Summit held in Dhaka in November, 2005 had welcomed and agreed in principle with the desire of the People's Republic of China and Japan to be associated as Observers. It had also decided that the SAARC Council of Ministers would decide the modalities in this regard at their 27th meeting, which is scheduled to be held in August 2006. Subsequently, Republic of Korea(ROK) and USA have also formally requested for Observer status with SAARC. The 5th Special Session of the SAARC Standing Committee, which met on April 11, 2006 to draw up the modalities for Observers also considered the requests from ROK and USA and recommended that the requests be approved. The SAARC Council of Ministers will further consider the issue in August 2006.